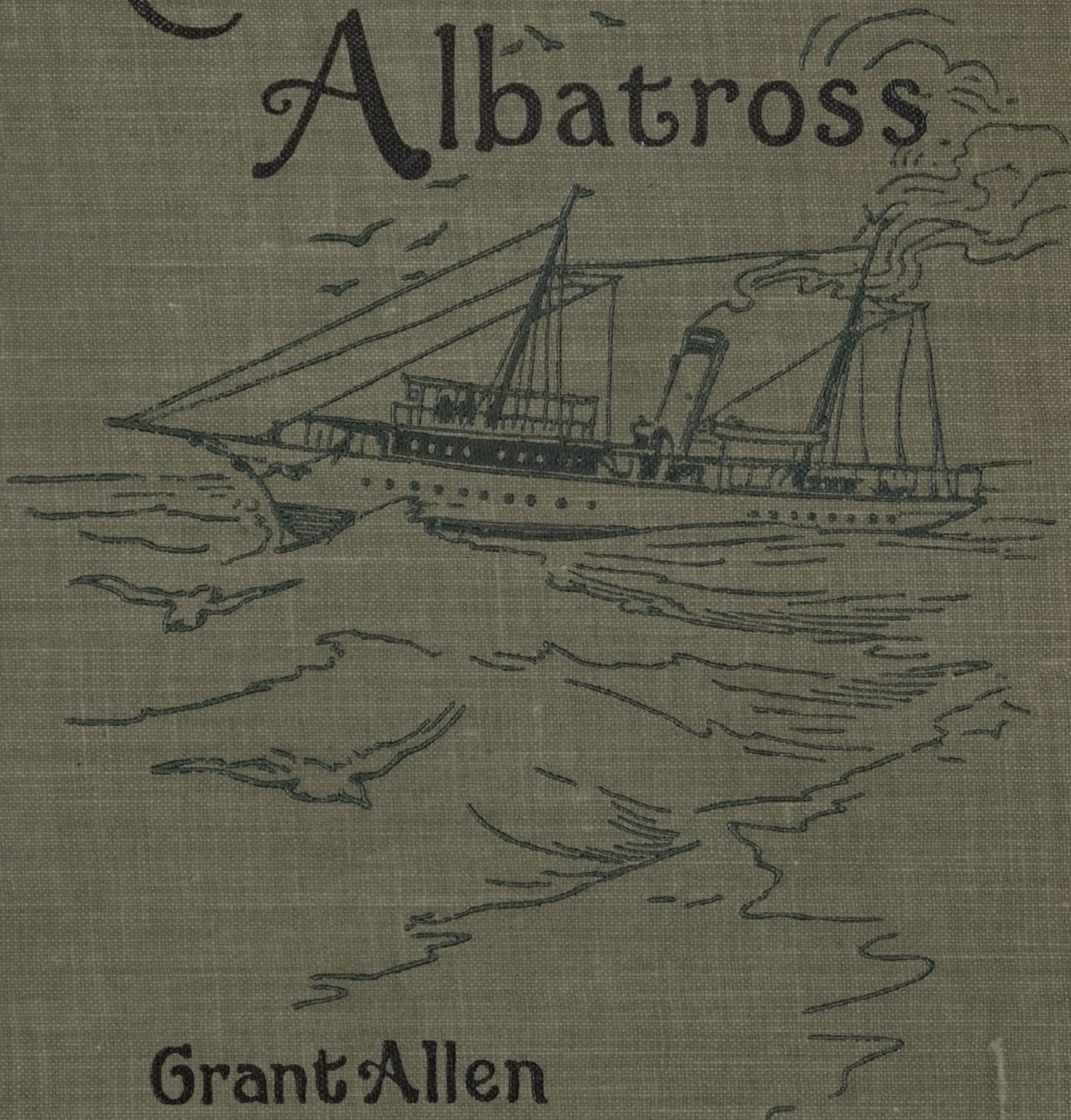
The Cruise of the Albatross



Grant Allen

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.



"BOTH BOYS FELL BACK, FAINT WITH FATIGUE."

See page 28.

THE

CRUISE OF THE ALBATROSS

OR

WHEN WAS WEDNESDAY THE TENTH?

A Story of the South Pacific

BY

GRANT ALLEN

AUTHOR OF "THE GREAT TABOO," "MICHAEL'S CRAG," "THE WOMAN WHO DID," "COMMON-SENSE SCIENCE," ETC.

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THE

CRUISE OF THE ALBATROSS

THE CRUISE OF THE ALBATROSS.

CHAPTER I.

WE SIGHT A BOAT.

On the eighteenth day out from Sydney, we were cruising under the lee of Erromanga, — of course you know Erromanga, an isolated island between the New Hebrides and the Loyalty group, — when, suddenly, our dusky Polynesian boy, Nassaline, who was at the masthead on the lookout, gave a surprised cry of "Boat ahoy!" and pointed with his skinny black finger to a dark dot, away southward on the horizon, in the direction of Fiji.

I strained my eyes and saw — well, a barrel or something. For myself, I should never have made out it was a boat at all, being somewhat

slow of vision at great distances; but, bless your heart! these Kanaka lads have eyes like hawks for pouncing down upon a canoe or a sail, no bigger than a speck afar off; so when Nassaline called out, confidently, "Boat ahoy!" in his broken English, I took out my binocular, and focussed it full on the spot towards which the skinny black finger pointed. Probably, thought I to myself, a party of natives, painted red, on the war-trail against their enemies in some neighboring island; or, perhaps, a "labor vessel," doing a veiled slave-trade in "indentured apprentices" for New Caledonia or the Queensland planters.

To my great surprise, however, I found out, when I got my glasses fixed full upon it, it was neither of these, but an open English rowboat, apparently, making signs of distress, and alone in the midst of the wide Pacific.

Now, mind you, one doesn't expect to find open English rowboats many miles from land, drifting about, casually, in those far-eastern waters. There's very little European shipping there of any sort, I can tell you; a man may

sometimes sail for days together, across that trackless sea, without so much as speaking a single vessel; and the few he does come across are mostly engaged in what they euphoniously call "the labor-trade,"—in plain English, kidnapping blacks or browns, who are induced to sign indentures for so many years' service (generally "three yams," that is to say, for three yam crops), and are then carried off by force or fraud to some other island, to be used as laborers in the cane fields or cocoanut groves. So I rubbed my eyes when I saw an open boat, of European build, tossing about on the open, and sang out to the man at the wheel:

"Hard a starboard, Tom! Put her head about for the dark spot to the sou'-by-south-east there!"

"Starboard it is!" Tom Blake answered, cheerily, setting the rudder about; and we headed straight for that mysterious little craft away off on the horizon.

But there! I see I've got ahead of my story, to start with, as the way is always with us salt-water sailors. We seafaring men can never spin

a yarn, turned straight off the reel all right from the beginning, like some of those book-making chaps can do. We have always to luff round again, and start anew on a fresh tack, half a dozen times over, before we can get well under weigh for the port we're aiming at. So I shall have to go back myself to Sydney once more, to explain who we were, and how we happened to be cruising about on the loose, that morning, off Erromanga.

My name, if I may venture to introduce myself formally, is Julian Braithwaite. I am the owner and commander of the steam-yacht *Albatross*, thirty-nine tons burden, as neat a little craft as any on the Pacific, though it's me that says it as oughtn't to say it; and I've spent the last five years of my life in cruising in and out among those beautiful archipelagos in search of health, which nature denies me in more northern latitudes. The oddest part of it is, though I'm what the doctors call consumptive, in England, — only fit to lie on a sofa and read good books, — the moment I get clear away into the Tropics I'm a strong man again, prepared to

fight any fellow of my own age and weight, and as fit for seamanship as the best Jack Tar in my whole equipment. The *Albatross* numbers eighteen in crew, all told; and as I am not a rich enough or selfish enough man to keep up a vessel all for my own amusement, my brother Jim and I combine business and pleasure by doing a mixed trade in copra or dried cocoanut with the natives, from time to time, or by running across between Sydney and San Francisco with a light cargo of goods for the Australian market.

Our habit was, therefore, to cruise in and out among the islands, with no very definite aim except that of picking up a stray trade whenever we could make one, and keeping as much within sight of land, for the sake of company, as circumstances permitted us. And that is just why, though bound for Fiji, we had gone so far out of our way, that particular voyage, as to be under the lee of Erromanga.

As for our black Polynesian boy, Nassaline, to tell you the truth, I am proud of that lad, for he's a trophy of war; we got him, at the point

of the sword, off a slaver. She was a fast French sloop, "recruiting" for New Caledonia, as they call it, on one of the New Hebrides, when the *Albatross* happened to come to anchor, by good luck or good management, in the same harbor. From the moment we arrived I had my eye on that smart French sloop, for I more than half suspected the means she was employing to beat up recruits. Early next morning, as I lay in my bunk, I heard a fearful row going on in boats not far from our moorings; and when I rushed up on deck, half dressed, to find out what the noise was about, blessed if I didn't see whole gangs of angry natives in canoes, — naked, of course, as the day they were born, or only dressed, like the ancient Britons, in a neat coat of paint, — pursuing the French sloop's jolly-boat, which was being rowed at high pressure by all its crew towards its own vessel. "By Jove!" said I, "what's up?" So, looking closer, I could make out four strapping young black boys, lying manacled in the bottom, kicking and screaming as hard as their legs and throats could go, while the Frenchmen rowed

away for dear life, and the Kanakas in the canoes paddled wildly after them, taking cock-shots at them, with very bad aim, from time to time with arrows and firearms. Such a splutter and noise you never heard in all your life. Ducks fighting in a pond were a mere circumstance to it.

"Tom Blake!" I sang out, "is the gig afloat there?"

"Aye, aye, sir," says Tom, jumping up. "She's ready at the starn. Shall we off and at 'em?"

"Right you are, Tom!" says I; "all hands to the gig here!"

Well, in less than three minutes, I'd got that boat under weigh, and was rowing ahead between the Frenchmen and their sloop, with our Remingtons ready, and everything in order for a good stand-up fight of it.

When the Frenchmen saw we meant to intercept them, and found themselves cut off between the savages on one side and an English crew well armed with rifles of precision on the other, they thought it was about time to open negotiations with the opposing party. So the skipper

stopped, as airy as a gentleman walking down the Boulevards, and called out to me, in French, "What do you want, ahoy there?"

"Ahoy there, yourself," says I, in my very best Ollendorff. "We want to know what you're doing with those youngsters?"

"Oh! it's that, is it?" says the Frenchman, as cool as a cucumber, coming nearer a bit, and talking as though we'd merely stopped him with polite inquiries about the time of day or the price of spring chickens; while the savages, seeing from our manner we were friendly to their side, left off firing for awhile, for fear of hitting us. "Why, these are apprentices of ours — indentured apprentices. We've bought them from their parents by honest trade — paid for 'em with Sniders, ammunition, calico, and tobacco; and if you want to see our papers and theirs, monsieur, here they are, look you, all perfectly *en règle*," and he held up the bundle for us to inspect in full, — with a telescope, I suppose, — at a hundred yards' distance.

"Row nearer, boys," I said, "and we'll talk a bit with this polite gentleman. He seems to

have views of his own, I fancy, about the proper method of engaging servants."

But when we tried to row up, the Frenchman stopped, and called out, at the top of his voice, in a very different tone, all bustle and bluster, "Look out, ahead, there! If you come a yard closer, we open fire. We want no interference from any of you Methodistical missionary fellows."

"We ain't missionaries," I answered, quietly, cocking my revolver, in the friendliest possible fashion, right in front of him; "we're traders and yachtsmen. Show 'em your Remingtons, boys, and let 'em see we mean business! That's right. Ready! present!—and fire when I tell you! Now, then, monsieur, you bought these boys, you say. So far, good. Next, then, if you please, who did you buy them from?"

The Frenchman turned pale, when he saw we were well armed and meant inquiry; but he tried to carry off still with a little face and bluster. "Why, their parents, of course," he answered, with a signal to his friends in the ship to cover us with their firearms.

"From their parents? Oh, yes! Well, how did you know the sellers were their parents?" I asked, still pointing my revolver towards him. "And why are the boys so unwilling to go? And what are the natives making such a noise over this little transaction in indentured labor for? If it's all as you say, what's this fuss and row about? Keep your rifles steady, lads."

"They want to back out of their bargain, I suppose, now they've drunk our rum and smoked our tobacco," the Frenchman said, evasively.

"No true, no true," one of the natives shouted out from beyond, in his broken English. "Man a *oui-oui!*" — that's what they call the French, you know, all through the South Pacific, — "man a *oui-oui*, bad, — no believe man, a *oui-oui*, — him make us drunk, so try to cheat us."

"Now you look here, monsieur," I said, severely, turning to the skipper, "I know what you've been doing. I've seen this little game tried on before. You landed here last night, with your peaceable equipment for recruiting labor, — we know what that means, — a Win-

chester sixteen-shooter and half a dozen pairs of English handcuffs. You brought on shore your 'trade'—a common clay pipe or two, some cheap red cloth, and a lot of bad French Government tobacco; and you treated the natives all round to free drinks of your square gin. When they'd reached that state of convenient conviviality that they didn't know who they were, or what they were doing, you took advantage of their guileless condition. You picked out the likeliest young men and lads, selected any particularly drunken native lying about loose, to represent their fathers, made 'em put their marks to a formal paper of indentures, and handed over twenty dollars, a bottle of rum, and a quid of tobacco, as a consolation for the wounded feelings of their distressed relations. You've been carrying them off all night at your devil's game; and now, in the morning, the natives are beginning to wake up sober, miss their friends, and put a summary stop to your little proceedings. Well, sir, I give you one minute to make up your mind; if you don't hand us over these four lads to set on shore

again, we'll open fire upon you; and as we're stronger than you, with the natives at our back, we'll make a prize of you, and tow you into Fiji on a charge of slave-trading."

Before the words were well out of my mouth, the French skipper had given the word "Fire!" and the bullets came whizzing past, and riddling the gunwale of the gig beside us. One of them grazed my arm below the shoulder and drew blood. Now there's nothing to put a man's temper up like getting shot in the arm. I lost mine, I confess, and I shouted aloud, "Fire, boys, and row on at them!" Our fellows fired, and the very same moment the natives closed in and went at them with their canoes, all alive with Sniders, lances, and hatchets. It was a lively time, I can tell you, for the next five minutes, with those lithe, long black fellows swarming over them like ants; and poor Tom Blake got a bullet from a French rifle in his thigh, that lodges there still in very comfortable quarters. But one of the Frenchmen fell back in the jolly-boat, shot through the breast, and the skipper, who turned out to be a fellow with

one sound leg and a substitute, was severely wounded. So we'd soon closed in upon them, the natives and ourselves, and overpowered their crew, which was only ten, all told, besides the fellows on the big vessel in the harbor.

Well, we took out the four boys, when the mill was over, and transferred them to our gig; and then we escorted the Frenchmen, ironed in their own handcuffs, to the deck of their sloop, with the natives on either side in their canoes rowing along abreast of us like a guard of honor. The crew of the sloop didn't attempt to interfere with us as we brought their comrades handcuffed aboard; if they had, why, then, with the help of the savages, we should have been more than a match for them. So we prowled around the ship on a voyage of discovery, and found ample evidence, in her get-up, of her character as an honest and single-hearted recruiter of labor. A rack in the cabin held eight Snider rifles, loaded for use, above which hung eight revolvers, employed, doubtless, in self-defence against the lawless character of the Kanakas, as the skipper (with his hands in irons

and his eyes in tears) most solemnly assured us. The sloop was prepared throughout, with loop-holes and battening-hatches, to stand a siege, and could have made short work of the natives alone had they tried to attack her, for she carried a small howitzer, not so big as our own; but she never suspected interference from a European vessel. We went down into her hold, and there we found about forty natives, men, women, and children, — free agents all, the skipper had declared, — packed as tight as herrings in a barrel, and with stench intolerable to the European nostril. Such a sight you never saw in your life. There they lay athwart ship, side by side, the unhappy black cattle, some handcuffed and manacled, others dead drunk and too careless to complain, while the women and children were crying and screaming, and the men were shouting as loud as they could shout in their own lingo.

Fortunately, we had a sailor aboard the *Albatross* who had been a beach-comber (or degraded white man who lives like a native) for three years on the island of Ambrymon, and had a

Kanaka girl for a sweetheart; so he could talk their palaver almost as easy as you can English, and he acted as interpreter for us with the poor people in the hold. We knocked their handcuffs off, and explained the situation to them. About a dozen of the wretchedest and most squalid-looking of the lot were prepared, even when we offered them freedom, to stand by their last night's bargain, and go on to New Caledonia; but the remainder were only too delighted to learn that they might go ashore again; and they gave us three ringing British cheers as soon as they understood we had really liberated them.

As for the four boys we'd got in the gig, three of them elected at once to go home to their own people on the island; but the fourth was our present black servant, Nassaline. He, poor boy, was an orphan; and his nearest relations, having held a consultation the day before whether they should bake him and eat him, or sell him to the Frenchman, had decided that, after all, he would be worth more, if paid for in tobacco and rum, than if roasted in plantain leaves. So, as soon as he found we were going to put him on

shore again, the poor creature was afraid after all he was being returned for the oven; and flinging himself on his face in the gig, grovelling and cringing, he took hold of our knees and besought us most piteously (as our sailor translated his words for us) to take him with us. Of course, when we entered into the spirit of the situation, we felt it was impossible to send the poor fellow back to be made "long pig" of; so, to his immense delight, we took him along, and a more faithful servant no man ever had than poor Nassaline proved from that day forth to me.

I've gone out of my way so far, as I said before, to tell you this little episode of my life in the South Pacific, partly in order to let you know who Nassaline was, and how we came by him; but partly, also, to give you a side glimpse of the sort of gentry, both European and native, one may chance to knock up against in those remote regions. It'll help you to understand the rest of my yarn. And now, if you please, I'll tack back again, once more, into my proper course, to the spot where I broke off in sight of Erromanga.

CHAPTER II.

THE BOAT'S CREW.

PRESENTLY, as we headed towards the black object on the horizon, Nassaline stretched out that skinny finger of his once more (no amount of feeding ever seemed to make Nassaline one ounce fatter), and cried out in his shrill little piping voice, "Two man on the boat! him makey signs for call us!"

I'd give anything to have eyes as sharp as those Polynesians. I looked across the sea, and the loppy waves in the foreground, and could just make out with the naked eye that the rowboat had something that looked like a red handkerchief tied to her bare mast, and a white signal flapping in the wind below it; but not a living soul could I distinguish in her without my binocular. So I put up my glasses and looked again. Sure enough, there they were,

two miserable objects, clinging, as it seemed, half dead, to the mast, and making most piteous signs with their hands to attract our attention. As soon as they saw that we had really sighted them, and were altering our course to pick them up, their joy and delight knew no bounds, as we judged. They flung up their arms ecstatically into the air, and then sank back, exhausted, as I guessed, on to the thwarts, where they had long ceased sitting or rowing.

They were wearied out, I imagined, with long buffeting against that angry and immeasurable sea, and must soon have succumbed to fatigue, if we hadn't caught sight of them.

We put on all steam, as in duty bound, and made towards them hastily. By and by, my brother Jim, who had been off watch, came up from below and joined me on deck, to see what was going forward. At the same moment, Nassaline cried out once more, "Him no two man! Him two boy! Two English boy! Him hungry, like a dying!" And, as he spoke, he held his own skinny bare arm up to his mouth, dramatically, and took a good bite at it, as if

to indicate in dumb show that the crew of the boat were now almost ready to eat one another.

Jim looked through the glasses, and handed them over to me in turn. "By George, Julian," he said, "Nassaline's right! It's a couple of boys, and, to judge by the look of them, they're not far off starving!"

I seized the glasses and fixed them upon the boat. We were getting nearer, now, and could make out the features of its occupants quite distinctly. A more pitiable sight never met my eyes. Her whole crew consisted of two white-faced lads, apparently about twelve or thirteen years old, dressed in loose, blue cotton shirts and European trousers, but horribly pinched with hunger and thirst, and evidently so weak as to be almost incapable of clinging to the bare mast whence they were trying to signal us.

Now, you land-loving folk can hardly realize, I dare say, what such an incident means at sea; but to Jim and me, who had sailed the lonely Pacific together, for five years at a stretch, that pathetic sight was full both of horror and unspeakable mystery. For anybody, even grown

men long used to the ocean, to be navigating that awful expanse of water, alone, in an empty boat, is little short of ghastly. Just think what it means! A stormy sheet that stretches from the north pole to the south, without one streak of continuous land to break it; a stormy sheet on which the winds and waves may buffet you about, in almost any direction, for five thousand miles, with only the stray chance of some remote oceanic isle to drift upon, or some coral reef to swallow you up with its gigantic breakers. But a couple of boys! — mere children, almost! — alone, and starving, on that immense desert of almost untravelled water! On the Atlantic itself your chance of being picked up from open boats by a passing vessel is slight enough, heaven knows! but on the Pacific, where ships are few and routes are far apart, your only alternative to starvation or foundering is to find yourself cast on the tender mercies of the cannibal Kanaka. No wonder I looked at Jim, and Jim looked at me, and each of us saw unaccustomed tears standing, half ashamed, in the eyes of the other.

"Stop her!" I cried. "Lower the gig, Tom Blake! Jim, we must go ourselves and fetch these poor fellows."

At the sound of my bell the engineer pulled up the *Albatross*, short and sharp, with admirable precision, and we lowered our boat to go out and meet them. As we drew nearer and nearer with each stroke of our oars, I could see still more plainly to what a terrible pitch of destitution and distress these poor lads had been subjected during their awful journey. Their cheeks were sunken, and their eyes seemed to stand back far in the hollow sockets. Their pallid white hands hardly clung to the mast by convulsive efforts with hooked fingers. It was clear they had used up their last reserve of strength in their wild efforts to attract our passing attention.

I thanked heaven it was Nassaline who kept watch at the masthead when they first hove in sight. No European eye could ever have discovered the meaning of that faint black speck upon the horizon. If it hadn't been for the sharp vision of our keen Polynesian friend,

these two helpless children might have drifted on in their frail craft forever, till they wasted away with hunger and thirst under the broiling eye of the hot Pacific noontide.

We pulled alongside, and lifted them into the gig. As we reached them, both boys fell back, faint with fatigue and with the sudden joy of their unexpected deliverance. "Quick, quick, Jim! your flask!" I cried, for we had brought out a little weak brandy and water on purpose. "Pour it slowly down their throats — not too fast at first — just a drop at a time, for fear of choking them."

Jim held the youngest boy's head on his lap, and opened those parched lips of his, that looked as dry as a piece of battered old shoe-leather. The tongue lolled out between the open teeth, like a thirsty dog's at midsummer, and was hard and rough as a rasp, with long, weary watching. We judged the lad at sight to be twelve years old or thereabouts. Jim put the flask to his lips, and let a few drops trickle slowly down his burnt throat. At touch of the soft liquid the boy's lips closed over the mouth of the flask

with a wild movement of delight, and he sucked in, eagerly, as you may see a child in arms suck at the mouthpiece of its empty feeding-bottle. "That's well," I said. "He's all right, at any rate. As long as he has strength enough to pull at the flask like that, we shall bring him round in the end somehow."

We took away the flask as soon as we thought he'd had as much as was good for him at the time, and let his head fall back once more upon Jim's kindly shoulder. Now that the first wild flush of delight at their rescue was fairly over, a reaction had set in; their nerves and muscles gave way simultaneously, and the poor lad fell back, half fainting, half sleeping, just where Jim with his fatherly solicitude chose to lay him.

Tom Blake and I turned to the elder lad. His was a harder and more desperate case. Perhaps he had tried more eagerly to save his helpless brother; perhaps the sense of responsibility for another's life had weighed heavier upon him at his age — for he looked fourteen; but at any rate he was well-nigh dead with exposure and exhaustion. The first few drops

we poured down his throat he was clearly quite unable to swallow. They gurgled back, insensibly. Tom Blake took out his handkerchief, and, tearing off a strip, soaked it in brandy and water in the cup end of the flask; then he gently moistened the inside of the poor lad's mouth and throat with it, till at last a faint swallowing motion was set up in the gullet. At that, we poured down some five drops, cautiously. To our delight and relief, they were slowly gulped down, and the poor white mouth stood agape, like a young bird's, in mute appeal for more water — more water.

We gave him as much as we dared, in his existing state, and then turned to the boat for some clue to the mystery.

She was an English-built rowboat, smart and taut, fit for facing rough seas, and carrying a short, stout mast amidships. On her stern we found her name, in somewhat rudely painted letters, *Messenger of Peace: Makilolo in Tanaki.* Clearly she had been designed for mission service among the islands, and the last words which followed her title must be meant to designate

her port, or the mission station. But what that place was I hadn't a notion.

"Where's Tanaki, Tom Blake?" I asked, turning round, for Tom had been navigating the South Seas any time this twenty years, and knew almost every nook and corner of the wide Pacific, from Yokohama to Valparaiso.

Tom shifted his quid from one cheek to the other, and answered, after a pause, "Dunno, sir, I'm sure. Never heerd tell of Tanaki in all my born days; an' yet I sorter fancied, too, I knowed the islands."

"There are no signs of blood or fighting in the boat," I said, examining it close. "They can't have escaped from a massacre, anyhow." For I remembered at once to what perils the missionaries are often exposed in these remote islands — how good Bishop Patteson had been murdered at Santa Cruz, and how the natives had broken the heads of Mason and Wood at Erromanga, not so many months back, in cold blood, out of pure lust of slaughter.

"But they must have run away in an awful hurry," Tom Blake added, overhauling the

locker of the boat, "for, see, she ain't found; there ain't no signs of food, or anything to hold it, nowheres, sir; and this 'ere little can must 'a' been the on'y thing they had with 'em for water."

He was quite right. The boat had clearly put to sea unprovisioned. It deepened our horror at the poor lads' plight, to think of this further aggravation of their incredible sufferings. For days they must have tossed, in hunger and thirst, on the great deep. But we could only wait to have the mystery cleared up when the lads were well enough to explain to us what had happened. Meanwhile, we could but look and wonder in silence; and, indeed, we had quite enough to do, for the present, in endeavoring to restore them to a state of consciousness.

"Any marks on their clothes?" my brother Jim suggested, with practical good sense, looking up from his charge as we rowed back towards the *Albatross*, with the *Messenger of Peace* in tow behind us. "That might help us to guess who they are, and where they hail from."

I looked close at the belts of the lads' blue shirts. On the elder's I read, in a woman's handwriting, "Martin Luther Macglashin, 6, '87." The younger boy's bore, in the same hand, the corresponding inscription, "John Knox Macglashin, 6, '86." It somehow deepened the tragedy of the situation to come upon those simple domestic reminiscences at such a moment.

"Sons of a Scotch missionary, apparently," I said, as I read them out. "If only we could find where their father was at work, we might manage to get some clue to this mystery."

"We can look him up," Jim answered, "when we get to Fiji."

We rowed back in silence the rest of the way to the *Albatross*, lifted the poor boys tenderly on board, and laid them down to rest on our own bunks in the cabin. Serang-Palo, our Malay cook, made haste at the galleys to dress them a little arrowroot with condensed milk; and before half an hour the younger boy was sitting up in Jim's arms, with his eyes and mouth wide open, craving eagerly for the nice warm mess we were obliged to dole out to his

enfeebled stomach in sparing spoonfuls, and with a trifle of color already returning to his pale cheeks. He was too ill to speak yet, — his brother, indeed, lay even now insensible on the bunk in the corner, — but as soon as he had finished the small pittance of arrowroot, which alone we thought it prudent to let him swallow at present, he mustered up just strength enough to gasp out a few words of solemn importance, in a very hollow voice. We bent over him to listen. They were broken words we caught, half rambling, as in delirium, but we heard them distinctly, —

"Steer for Makilolo — Island of Tanaki — Wednesday the tenth — Natives will murder them — My mother — my father — Calvin — and Miriam."

Then it was evident he could not say another word. He sank back on the pillow, breathless and exhausted. The color faded from his cheek once more as he fell into his place. I poured another spoonful of brandy down his parched throat. In three minutes more he was sleeping peacefully, with long, even breath, like one who

hadn't slept for nights before on the tossing ocean.

I looked at Jim and bit my lips hard. "This is, indeed, a fix," I cried, utterly nonplussed. "Where on earth, I should like to know, is this island of Tanaki?"

"Don't know," said Jim. "But wherever it is, we've got to get there."

CHAPTER III.

THE MYSTERY SOLVED.

We paused for awhile, and looked at one another's faces blankly.

"Suppose," Jim suggested at last, "we get out the charts, and see if such a place as Tanaki is marked upon them anywhere."

"Right you are," says I. "Overhaul your maps, and when found, make a note of."

Well, we did overhaul them for an hour at a stretch, and searched them thoroughly, inch by inch, Jim taking one sheet of the Admiralty chart for the South Pacific, and I the other; but never a name could we find remotely resembling the sound or look of Tanaki. Tom Blake, too, was positive, as he put it himself, that "there weren't no such name, not in the whole thunderin' Pacific, nowheres." So, after long and patient search, we gave up the quest,

and determined to wait for further particulars till the boys had recovered enough to tell us their strange story.

Meanwhile, it was clear we must steer somewhere. We couldn't go beating wildly up and down the Pacific, on the hunt for a possibly non-existent Tanaki, allowing the *Albatross* to drift at her own sweet will wherever she liked, pending the boys' restoration to speech and health. So the question arose what direction we should steer in. Jim solved that problem as easy as if it had come out of the first book of Euclid (he was always a mathematician, Jim was, while, for my part, when I was a little chap at school, the asses' bridge at an early stage effectually blocked my further progress. I could never get over it, even with the persuasive aid of what Doctor Slasher used politely to call his *vis a tergo*).

"They're too weak to row far, these lads," Jim said, in his didactic way, — ought to have been a schoolmaster or a public demonstrator, Jim: such a head for proving things! "Therefore they must mostly have been drifting before

the wind ever since they started. Now, wind for the last fortnight's been steadily nor'east," — the anti-trade was blowing. "Therefore, they must have come from the nor'east, I take it; and if we steer clean in the face of the wind, we're bound sooner or later to arrive at Tanaki."

"Jim," said I, admiring him, like, "you're really a wonderful chap. You do put your finger down so pat on things! Steer to the nor'east it is, of course. But I wonder how far off Tanaki lies, and what chance we've got of reaching there by Wednesday the tenth?" For, though we didn't even know yet who the people were who were threatened with massacre, at this supposed Tanaki, we couldn't let them have their throats cut in cold blood without at least an attempt to arrive there in time to prevent it.

Of course we knew with our one brass gun we should be more than a match for any Melanesian islanders we were likely to meet with, if once we could get there; but the trouble was, should we reach in time to forestall the massacre?

By Wednesday the tenth we must reach Tanaki — wherever that might be.

Jim took out a piece of paper and totted up a few figures carelessly on the back. "We've plenty of coal," he said, "and I reckon we can make nine knots an hour, if it comes to a push, even against this head wind. To-day's the sixth; that gives us four clear days still to the good. At nine knots, we can do a run of two hundred and thirty-six knots a day. Four two-hundred-and-thirty-sixes is nine hundred and forty-four, isn't it? Let me see; four sixes is twenty-four, put down four and carry two; four three's is twelve, and two's fourteen; four two's — yes, that's all right: nine hundred and forty-four, you see, ex-actly. Well, then, look here, Julian: unless Tanaki's further off than nine hundred and forty-four nautical miles, — which isn't likely, — we ought to get there by twelve o'clock on Wednesday, at latest. Nine hundred and forty-four miles is an awful long stretch for two boys to come in an open boat. I don't expect these boys can have done as much as that — or anything like it."

"Wind and current were with them," I objected, "and she was drifting like one o'clock when we first sighted her. I shouldn't be surprised if she was making five or six knots an hour before half a gale, all through that hard blow. And the poor boys look as if they might have been out a week or more. Still, it isn't likely they would have come nine hundred knots, as you say, or anything like it. If we put on all steam, we ought to arrive in time to save their father and mother. Anyhow, we'll try it." And I shouted down the speaking-tube, "Hi, you there, engineer!—pile on the coal hard and make her travel. We want all the speed we can get out of the *Albatross* for the next three days."

"All square, sir," says Jenkins; and he piled on, accordingly.

So we steamed ahead, as hard as we could go, in the direction where we expected to find Tanaki.

Half an hour later, Nassaline, who had been down below, with the Malay cook and one of the men, looking after the patients, came up on

deck once more, with a broad grin on his jet-black face, from ear to ear, and exclaimed in his very best Kanaka-English, "Boy come round again. Eat plenty arrowroot. Eat allee samee like as if starvee. Call very hard for see Massa Captain."

"What do you think's the matter with them, Nassaline?" I asked, as I walked along by his side towards the companion-ladder.

Nassaline's ideas were exclusively confined to a certain fixed and narrow Polynesian circle. "Tink him fader go sell him for laborer to a man *oui-oui*, or make oven hot for him," he answered, grinning; "so him run away, and come put himself aboard Massa Captain ship; so eat plenty — no beat, no starvee."

It was his own personal history put in brief, and he fitted it at once as the only possible explanation to these other poor fugitives.

"Nonsense!" I said, with a compassionate smile at his innocence. "White people don't sell or eat their children, stupid! It's my belief, Nassaline, we'll never make a civilized Christian creature of you, in a tall hat, and

with a glass in your eye. You ain't cut out for it, somehow. How many times have I explained to you, boy, that Christians never cook and eat their enemies? They only love them, and blow them up with Gatlings or Armstrongs — a purely fraternal method of expressing slight differences of international opinion. Now, come along down, and let's see these lads. It's some of your heathen relations, I expect, the poor fellows are flying from."

But I omitted to have remarked to him (as I might have done) that I hadn't seen such a painful sight before, since I saw the inhabitants of a French village in Lorraine — old men, young girls, and mothers with babies pressed against their breasts — flying, pell-mell, before the sudden onslaught of a hundred and fifty Christian Prussian Uhlans. These little peculiarities of our advanced civilization are best not mentioned to the heathen Polynesian.

In the cabin we found both boys now fairly on the high road to recovery, though still, of course, much too weak to talk; but bursting over, for all that, with eagerness to tell us their

whole eventful history. For my own part, I, too, was all eagerness to hear it; but anxiety for their safety made me restrain my impatience. The elder boy, now leaning on his elbow and staring wildly before him with horror, — a mere skeleton to look at, with his sunken cheeks and great hollow eyes, — began to break forth upon me with his long tale in full; but I soon put a stop to that, you may be pretty sure, with most uncompromising promptitude. "My dear Mr. Martin Luther Macglashin," I said, severely, giving him the full benefit of all his own various high-sounding names, for greater impressiveness, "if you don't lean back this moment upon your pillow, quiet your rolling eye down to every-day proportions, and answer only in the shortest possible words nothing but the plain questions I put to you, — hang me, sir, if I don't turn you and John Knox adrift again upon the wild waves, and continue on my course for Levuka in Fiji."

"Why, how did you come to know our names?" he exclaimed, astonished. "You must be as sharp as a lynx, captain."

"That's not an answer to any question I

asked you," I replied, with as much sternness as I could put in to my voice, looking at the poor fellow's starved white face. "But as a special favor to a deserving fellow creature, I don't mind telling you. I'm as sharp as a lynx, as you say, and a trifle sharper; for no lynx would have looked for your names on the flap of your shirts. There, that'll do now; don't try to talk; but just answer me quietly. Where do you come from, and where do you want us to go to?"

Martin lifted up his face and answered, with becoming brevity, "Tanaki."

"That's better!" I said. "That's the sort of way a fellow ought to answer, when he's more than half starved with a week at sea. But the next thing is, where's Tanaki?"

"It's one of the group that used to be called the Duke of Cumberland's Islands," the boy answered, faintly, yet overflowing with eagerness. "They lie just beyond the Ellice Archipelago, nearly on the line of a hundred and eighty, as you go towards the Union Group along the parallel of —"

"Now, my dear boy," I said, "if you run on like that, as I said before, I shall have to turn you adrift again in your open boat at the mercy of the ocean. Do be quiet, won't you, and let me look up your island?"

"We can't be quiet," Master John Knox put in, eagerly, "when we know they're going to murder our father and mother and Calvin and Miriam, on Wednesday morning."

"Just you hold your tongue, sir," I said, pushing him down again on his bunk, "and wait till you're spoken to. Now, not another word, either of you, till I've consulted my chart. Jim, hand down the Admiralty sheets again, there's a good fellow, will you?"

Jim handed them down, and we commenced our scrutiny at once.

We soon found the Duke of Cumberland's Islands, and, as good luck would have it, found we were steering as straight as an arrow for them. The direction of the wind had not misled us. But still no such place as Tanaki could we find anywhere.

"It used to be called 'The Long Reef,'"

Martin said, looking up; "but now we call it by the native name, Tanaki."

"Oh, the Long Reef!" I said; "why didn't you say so at first? I know that well enough by sight on the chart; but I never heard it called Tanaki before. That accounts, of course, for the milk in the cocoanut. Jim, hand along the calipers here, and let's measure out the course. Two — four — six — eight," I went on, looping along line of sailing with the calipers. "A trifle short of eight hundred miles. Say seven hundred and eighty. And we've till Wednesday morning. Well, we ought to do it."

"You'll be in time to save them, then!" the elder boy cried, jumping up once more, like a Jack-in-the-box. "You'll be in time to save them!"

"Will you be quiet, if you please?" I said, poking him down again flat, and holding my hand on his mouth. "Oh, yes! I expect we'll be in time to save them. If only you'll let us alone, and not make such a noise. We can do nine knots an hour easy, under all steam; and

that ought to bring us up to Tanaki, as you call it, by Wednesday morning in the very small hours. Let's see, we've got four clear days to do it in."

"Five," the boy answered. "Five. To-day's Friday."

"No, no," I replied, curtly. "Will you please shut up? Especially when you only darken counsel with many words. You're out of your reckoning. To-day's Saturday, I tell you." And, in point of fact, indeed, it really was Saturday.

"No, it's Friday," Martin went on, with extraordinary persistence.

"Saturday," I repeated. "Knife; scissors; knife; scissors."

"But we got away from Tanaki eight days ago," the boy declared, strongly, with a very earnest face; "and it was Thursday when we left. I kept count of the days and nights all that awful time we were tossing about on the ocean alone, and I'm sure I'm right. To-day's Friday."

"Jim," I said, turning to my brother, "what day of the week do you make it?"

"Why, Saturday, of course," Jim answered, with confidence.

I went to the bottom of the companion-ladder and called out aloud, where the boy could hear me, "Tom Blake, what day of the week and month is it?"

"Saturday the sixth, sir," Tom called out, promptly.

"There, my boy," I said, turning to him, "you see you're mistaken. You've lost count of the time in this awful journey of yours. I expect you were half unconscious the last day and night. But, good heavens, Jim, just to think of what they've done! They've been out nine days and nights in an open boat, almost without food or drink, and they've come all that incredible distance before the high wind. Except with a ripping good breeze behind them, they could never have done it."

"For my part," said Jim, looking up from his chart, "I can hardly understand how they ever did it at all. I declare, I call it nothing short of a miracle!"

And so, indeed, it was; for it seemed as though

the wind had drifted them straight ahead, from the moment they started, in the exact direction where the *Albatross* was to meet them.

I'm an old seafaring hand by this time, and I may be superstitious, but I see the finger of fate in such a coincidence as that one.

CHAPTER IV.

MARTIN LUTHER'S STORY.

For the next two days we went steaming ahead as hard as we could go in a bee-line to the northeastward, in the direction of the Duke of Cumberland's Islands; but it was two days clear before those unfortunate boys, Jack and Martin, — for that was what they called one another, for short, in spite of their severely theological second names, — were in a condition to tell us exactly what had happened, without danger to their shattered nerves and impaired digestions.

When they did manage to speak, — both at once, for choice, in their eagerness to get their story out, — here's about what their history came to, as we pieced it together, bit by bit, from the things they told us at different times. If I were one of those writing chaps, now, that know how to tell a whole ten years' history, end on end,

exactly as it happened, without missing a detail, I'd get it all out for you, just as Martin told us; or, better still, I'd give it to you in a single connected piece, between inverted commas, as his own words, beginning, "I was born," said he, "in the city of Edinburgh," and so forth, after the regular, high-and-dry literary fashion. But how on earth those clever book-making fellows can ever remember a whole long speech, word for word, from beginning to end, I never could make out, and never shall, neither. What memories they must have to do it, to be sure! It's my own belief they make it up, more than half out of their own heads, as they go along, and are perfectly happy if it only just sounds plausible. But anyhow, Martin Luther Macglashin didn't tell us all his story at a single time, or in a connected way; he gave us a bit now, and a bit again, with additions from Jack, according as he was able. So being, as I say, no more than a free-and-easy master mariner myself, without skill in literature, I'm not going to try to repeat it all, word for word, to you, precisely as it came, but shall just take the liberty

of spinning my yarn my own way, and letting you have, in short, the gist and substance of what we gradually got out of our two fugitives.

Well, it seems that Jack and Martin's father was, just as I suspected, a Scotch missionary on the Island of Tanaki. He lived there with another family of missionaries of the same sect, in peace and quiet, as well as with an English merchant of the name of Williams, who traded with the natives for calico, knives, glass beads, and tobacco. For a long time things had gone on pretty comfortably in the little settlement; though, to be sure, the natives did sometimes steal Mr. Macglashin's fowls, or threaten to tie Mr. Williams to a cocoanut palm and take cock-shots at him with a Snider, out of pure lightness of heart, unless he gave them rum, square gin, or brandy. Still, in spite of these playful little eccentricities of the good-humored Kanakas, who will have their joke, murder or no murder, all went as merrily as a wedding bell (as they say in novels), till suddenly one morning a French labor-vessel — I suspect the very one we had intercepted in the act of trying to carry off

Nassaline — put into the harbor in search of "apprentices."

She was a very bad lot, from what the boys told us; a genuine slaver of the worst type; and she stirred up a deal of mischief at Makilolo.

On the shore, the chief of Tanaki was drawn up to receive them, with all his warriors, tastefully but inexpensively rigged out in a string of blue beads round the neck, an anklet of shells, and a head-dress of a single large yellow feather.

"Who are you?" shouts the chief, at the top of his voice. "You man a *oui-oui?*"

"Yes," the Frenchman shouts back, in his pigeon-English. "Me de commander of dis French ship. Want to buy boys. Must sell them to us. Tanaki French island. Discovered by Bougainville."

"No, no," says the chief, in pigeon-English, again. "Tanaki no belong a man a *oui-oui*, Tanaki belong a Queenie England. Capitaney Cook find him long time back. My father little fellow then; him see Capitaney, him tell me often. Capitaney Cook no man a *oui-oui;* him fellow English."

The other natives joined in at once with their loud cry, "Chief speak true. Tanaki belong a Queenie England. Tanaki no belong a man a *oui-oui*. If man a *oui-oui* want to take Tanaki, man a Tanaki come out and fight him." And they threw themselves at once into a threatening attitude.

"Have you got any Englishmen here?" the French skipper called out, to make sure of his ground.

"Yes," says the missionary, — our boys' father, — standing out from the crowd. "Three English families here. Settled on the island. And we deny that this group belongs to the French Republic."

At that, the Frenchman pulled back a bit. When he saw there was likely to be opposition, and that his proceedings were watched by three English families, he drew in his horns a little. He knew if he interfered too openly with the missionaries' proceedings, an English gunboat might come along, sooner or later, and overhaul him for fomenting discord on an island known to be under the British protectorate.

So he only answered, in French, "Well, we're peaceable traders, monsieur. We don't want to interfere with the British Government. Consider us friends. All we desire is to hire laborers." And he landed his boat's crew before the very face of Macglashin and the Tanaki warriors.

At first, as often happens in these islands, the natives were very little disposed to trade with the strangers in boys or women, for they were afraid of the Frenchmen; and Macglashin and the other missionary did all they knew to prevent the newcomers from carrying off any of the islanders into practical slavery. But after awhile the Frenchmen produced their regulation bottles of square gin (that's what they call Hollands in the South Pacific), and began to treat the chief and the other savages to drinks all round, as much as you liked, with nothing to pay for it. In a very short time, the chief had got so much liquor aboard that his legs wouldn't answer the rudder any longer, and he began to reel about like a perfect madman. Most of the other full-grown men natives followed suit, before long, and lay down on the beach half dead with

drunkenness. Perhaps the liquor was drugged; perhaps it wasn't; but anyhow, in spite of all the missionaries could do, the shore, before nightfall, was in a condition of the wildest and most bestial orgies. The men, in what the newspapers call "a high state of vinous exhilaration," were ready to sell their boys and girls, or anything else on earth, for a little more gin; and as the missionaries were naturally helpless to prevent it, the Frenchman was soon driving a roaring trade in flesh and blood against the drunken savages.

The businesslike way they went to work, Jack and Martin told us, was horribly disgusting. The women, indeed, they tried to wheedle and cajole, — "You like go along a New Caledonia along a me? Only three yam times; then ship bring you back again. Very good feed; plenty nyam-nyam. Pay very good. Pay money. Lots of shop. You buy what you like: you buy red dress, red handkerchief, beads like-a-chiefie. No fight; no beat; no swear at you. You good girl; I good fellow master." But if they couldn't induce them, by fair words and

promises and little presents of cheap French finery, to put their mark to their sham indentures, then they just knocked them down with a blow on the head, dragged them by their hair to the boats hard by, and got their fathers or husbands to put their marks, and receive a few dollars and some red cloth in payment.

As for the boys, they handled them like so many animals in a market. "Turn round, *cochon!* Show me your face! *Mille tonnerres*, let me see how you can run, you dirty young blackguard!" They examined them as a veterinary would examine a horse. "Why, there was our little fellow, Nangaree," Jack said to us, with deep concern, "Nangaree, that used to clean up things for mother at the mission house: his father sold him for twenty dollars. The captain looked at his legs, and at the glands in his throat, to see if he'd had the chicken-pox and the measles. Then he said to his mate, 'This lot's cheap enough. He's a first-rate lad, and can speak English. He'll do for the hold. Bundle him along' And the mate caught him up by the scruff of his neck and hauled him to the boats, kicking and

screaming; and that was the last we saw of poor Nangaree!"

For three days and nights, it seems, this horrible inhuman market or slave-fair went on upon the beach, the Frenchmen taking care to keep the natives well primed with spirits all the time, till they'd got their hold full, and were prepared to sail away again with their living cargo. Then at last they upped anchor, and out of the harbor. But before they went, the skipper, it appears, who was angry at the missionaries for having interfered with him, and was afraid they might report his proceedings to the British Government when next the mission ship came that way on her provisioning rounds, took aside the chief in a confidential chat, and tried to inflame his mind, all mad drunk that he was, against the English residents. Apparently he had made so good a three days' work of it with his horrible trade, and found it so convenient to draw his supplies from this remote and almost unvisited island, that he thought it would be nice if, before his next visit, he could get rid altogether of these meddlesome strangers. He didn't want any European witnesses to crop

up against him in future; so he told the chief, with a great show of confidence, that Macglashin and his friends were not English at all, but Scotch; and he pointed out that it was uncomfortable for the natives to be interfered with in their trading operations by a set of white-livered curs who objected to the selling of boys and girls into temporary slavery. Surely a chief had a right to do as he would with his own subjects! What else he said, heaven knows; but this is what happened as soon as the French, with their horrid cargo, had got well clear of the unhappy island.

That very afternoon, the chief, beginning to get sober again, but quarrelsome from headache and the other after-effects of a long debauch, came round to the mission house in a towering rage, and asked the unsuspecting missionary, "Say, white man, are you a Scotchman?"

"Yes," said Macglashin, not knowing what was coming, "I'm a Scotchman, chief, certainly. I was born in Scotland."

The chief laughed loud. "Ha, ha," he said, "then Queenie England no take care a you. No

send gunboat to shoot us all dead, if man a Tanaki come up and kill you."

At that Macglashin grew alarmed, and answered, "Oh, yes! The Queen of England would certainly avenge us." And he tried to explain the exact relation in which Scotchmen stood to the British crown, — that they were just as much British subjects as Englishmen, entitled to precisely the same amount of protection. But the chief couldn't be made to understand. The French skipper had evidently poisoned his mind against them. "Man a Tanaki don't want no Scotchman interfere with chief when him go to sell him boy and him woman," the savage said, angrily. "Tanaki belong a Queenie England. Queenie England no want Scotchman interfere with people in Tanaki. Scotchman better keep quiet in him house. Queenie England no mind Scotchman."

And no amount of reasoning produced any effect upon him.

The missionaries went to bed that evening with many misgivings. They felt that, for the first time, so far as the natives were concerned,

the powerful protection of the British flag was now practically withdrawn from them. They were alone, as strangers, among those excited black fellows.

At dead of night, while the two boys slept, a horrible din outside the mission house awoke them. They looked out, and saw the red glare of torches outside. A frightful horde of Kanakas, naked save for their war-paint, drunk with the Frenchman's rum and armed with his Sniders, surrounded the frail building in a hideous mob of savagery. As Martin put his head out of the lattice a bullet came whizzing past. He withdrew it for a moment, terrified, and then looked out again. As he did so the other Scotch missionary appeared upon the veranda, half dressed, and, holding up his hand in dignified remonstrance, began in Kanaka with his gentle, mild voice, "My friends, my dear friends —" Before he could get any further, the chief stepped forward, and, aiming a blow at his gray locks with a sacred native tomahawk, felled the peaceful old teacher senseless to the ground. Martin shuddered with horror. The old man lay weltering

in a pool of his red, gushing gore, while the savages danced in triumph over his prostrate body, or smeared themselves with great lines and circles of his warm heart-blood.

"Come on!" the chief cried in Kanaka. "Kill all! Kill every one! They're taboo to our gods. Don't fear their gunboats. Queenie England won't trouble to protect a Scotchman."

Then began a hideous orgy of wild lust and slaughter. The savages rushed on, drunk with blood and rum, and dragged out the wife and children of the other missionary, whom they brained upon the spot, before the terrified eyes of the trembling Macglashins. The trader Williams ran up, just then, with his revolver in his hand, followed by two faithful black servants from a neighboring island; but the French skipper had been cunning enough there, too. "Him a Welshman!" the savages cried. "Queenie England no care for him!" For indeed he happened to be born in Wales. And they shot him down as he came, before he could open fire upon them. Then they turned to massacre the

Macglashins, the only remaining Europeans on the island.

But just at that moment a sudden idea seemed to strike the chief. He cried out, "Stop!" The savages fell back, and listened with eagerness to what was coming. Then the chief shouted out again in Kanaka: "I have a thought. The gods have sent it to me. This is my thought. We have killed enough for to-night. Let us catch them alive and bind them. Next moon is the great feast of my father Taranaka. I have an idea — a divine idea. Let us keep them till that day, and then, in honor of the gods, let us roast them and eat them."

The whole assembly answered, with a wild shout of delighted assent, "Taranaka! Taranaka! Our great dead chief! In honor of Taranaka, let us roast them and eat them."

So they rushed wildly on upon the defenceless white family, bound them in rude cords of native make, and carried them off in triumph to Taranaka's temple tomb in the palm grove.

And that was as much as we could allow the boys to tell us, at a time, of their strange adven-

tures. We were afraid of overtaxing their strength at first, and tried to confine their attention as much as possible to tinned meats, and sea-biscuit soaked in condensed milk; though I'm bound to admit that as soon as they began to recover appetite a bit, they addressed themselves steadily and seriously to their food, with true British pluck and perseverance. In spite of the terrors from which they had just escaped, they did the fullest justice to Serang-Palo's cookery.

CHAPTER V.

A BREAK-DOWN.

TIME went on, and the boys began to grow visibly fatter. It was Tuesday evening, and we hoped, putting on all steam as we were doing, to reach Tanaki by the small hours of Wednesday morning, in good season to relieve the four unhappy souls still, as we believed, detained there in captivity. We were strained on the very rack of excitement, indeed, with our efforts to arrive before the savages could take any further step; and the boys' anxiety for their parents' and their sister's safety had naturally communicated itself to us, as we listened to their story. Why, it was that very evening that Martin had told us the rest of his strange tale, — how his father and mother, with his younger brother Calvin and his sister Miriam, had been confined by the savages in the grass-hut temple,

while he and Jack were put to lie in an open outhouse hard by, guarded only by a single half-intoxicated Kanaka. Well, in the middle of the night, those two brave boys had silently gnawed their ropes asunder, and, creeping past their guard, had stolen away to the beach in the desperate effort to escape in search of assistance. There they luckily found the mission boat hauled down on the shore; and waiting only to take a can of water from the spring close by, and a bunch of half-ripe bananas from a garden on the harbor, they had put forth alone on their wild and adventurous voyage across the lone Pacific. I can tell you, it brought the tears to our eyes more than once, rough sailors as we were, to hear the strange story of their hopeless sail; and it made our blood boil to learn how these ungrateful savages had repaid the earnest and devoted life-labor of the unhappy missionaries.

"No wonder him hungry," that young monkey Nassaline said, with profound condolence, "if him don't hab nuffin to eat for ten day long but unripe banana." Anything that concerned the

human stomach always touched a most tender and responsive chord in Nassaline's sympathies.

At eight bells, when my watch was up, I went off for a quiet snooze to my cabin. I knew I should be wanted for hot work about three in the morning, for I didn't expect to effect the rescue without a hard fight for it; so I thought it best to get what sleep I could before arriving at the islands. So I lay in my berth, with my eyes shut, and a thin sheet spread over me (for it was broiling hot tropical weather), and I was just beginning to doze off in comfort, when suddenly I felt something move under me like a young earthquake. Next minute I was jolted clean out of my bed, with such a jerk that I thought at first we were all going to sleep on the bed of the ocean.

"Halloo," I cried out to Jim, up atop, rushing out of my cabin. "What's up? Anything wrong? What's happened?"

"Grazed a reef, I guess," Jim shouted back, calmly. "No land in sight, but shoal water and breakers ahead. We seem to be in danger."

Cool chap, Jim, under no matter what circumstances. But this looked serious. In a second I was up, and peering out over the bows into the dark, black water. The *Albatross* had slowed, and was reversing engines. All round us we could see great heaving breakers.

"No land hereabouts," Jim sung out, consulting the chart once more. "We ought to be at least five miles to suth'ard of the Great Caycos Band Reef."

As he spoke, I saw Martin's white face appearing suddenly at the top of the companion-ladder. He flung up his hands in an agony of despair. "Oh, how terrible!" the poor lad blurted out in his misery. "I ought to have remembered! I ought to have told you! Father says the charts hereabouts are all many miles wrong in their bearings. The Caycos Reef lies six or seven knots south by west of the point it's marked at!"

In a ferment of anxiety I turned up our other Sydney charts at once to test his statement. Sure enough, there was a discrepancy, a considerable discrepancy, both in latitude and

longitude, between the two maps. At the margin of one I read this vague and uncomfortable note: "These islands are reported by certain navigators to lie further south and west than here laid down, and have never been accurately surveyed by good authorities. Careful navigation by day alone is recommended to master mariners."

Jim looked at me, and I looked at Jim. What on earth could we do in such a fix as this? To go on in the dark, with unknown reefs before us, was to imperil the *Albatross* and all on board; to cast anchor where we stood and hold back till daylight was to risk not arriving in time to rescue the unfortunate missionary with his wife and family. I glanced at the boy's white face as he stood by the companion-ladder, and made up my mind at once. Come what might, I must push forward and save them.

"Slow engines," I called down the pipe, "and proceed half speed till further orders. Jim, go for'ard, and keep a sharp eye on the breakers. As soon as we're clear, we'll steam ahead, full

pelt again, and risk going ashore sooner than leave these poor folks on the island to be cruelly massacred."

"Thank you," the boy said, with an ashy face, and lay down upon the deck, unmanned and trembling. His lips were as white, I give you my word, as this sheet of paper I'm this moment writing upon.

For a hundred yards or so we slowed, and went ahead without coming to any further stop; then, suddenly, a sharp thud, — a dull sound of grating, — a thrill through the ship; and Jim, looking up from in front, with a cool face as usual, called out at the top of his voice, but with considerable annoyance, "Well, now, we're aground again!"

And so we were, this time with a vengeance.

"Back her," I called out, "back her hard, Jenkins!" and they backed her as hard as the engines could spurt; but nothing came of it. We were jammed on the reef about as tight as a ship could stick, and no power on earth could ever have got us off till the tide rose again.

Well, we tried our very hardest, reversing engines first, and then putting them forward again, to see if we could run through it by main force; but it was all in vain. Aground we were, and aground we must remain till there was depth of water enough on the reef to float us.

Fortunately, the tide was rising fast, and three hours more would see us out of our difficulties. Three hours was a very serious delay; but I calculated if we got off the reef by two in the morning, we should still have time to reach Tanaki pretty comfortably before seven. We must enter the harbor by daylight, no doubt, which would perhaps be dangerous; because, when the savages saw us arrive, they might make haste to cut the white people's throats before we could get up to rescue them. But I thought it more likely they would try to save them, to prevent our opening fire upon them by way of punishment; so, with what comfort we could, we stuck on upon the reef, and waited for the inevitable tide to come and float us.

Waiting for the tide is always slow business.

At about half-past one, however, the water began to deepen under the ship, and we could feel her rise and fall,—bump, bump, bump,—with each onslaught of the breakers. Now, bumping on a reef isn't exactly wholesome for a ship's bottom, so I gave the word to Jenkins for the engines to go to work again; and presently, after two or three unsuccessful attempts, we got her safe off, by energetic reversing, and found, to our great delight, that the *Albatross*, like a tight little craft that she was, had sprung no leak, and was making no water. Her sound old timbers had just grazed the surface of that flat-topped reef without suffering any serious internal injury.

As soon as we were free, and had examined our hold, I shouted down, once more, "Now, forward, boys, as hard as you can go, and mind, Jenkins, you make her travel!"

To my immense surprise, instead of obeying my orders, the *Albatross* suddenly stood stock-still in the trough of a wave, drifting helplessly about like a log on the ocean.

"Now then," I shouted down again, half angry

and half alarmed, "what are you doing there, Jenkins? Didn't you hear what I said? Stir your stumps, my friend! Double time, and forward!"

Imagine my horror when the engineer shouted back, in a voice of blank dismay, "I can't, sir. She won't work. Don't answer to the valve. We've injured something in backing her off the reef there."

This was an awkward job. And at such a crisis, too! In a minute I was down in the engine-room myself, inspecting all the valves and bearings, with lamp in hand, and with the closest scrutiny. Before long we had ascertained the extent of the injury. A piece of the engine was broken that would certainly take us six or eight hours to repair. And it was already two o'clock on the Wednesday morning!

But that wasn't all, either. Another serious difficulty beset us in our work. We were beating about in the angry sea off the Caycos Reef, with the breakers dashing in, and the surf running high. If we tried to mend the

broken engine where we stood, we should infallibly be dashed to pieces on the dangerous shallows. You can't go to work like that on a lee shore, with no engine to fall back upon, and the wind blowing half a gale. The only thing possible for us was to hoist sail and make for the open sea to southward under all canvas. That was taking us further away from Tanaki, of course; but it was our one chance of getting our engine repaired in peace and quiet.

So we hoisted sail and stood out to sea once more, leaving the dim, long line of surf gradually behind us on the lee, and beating, by constant tacks, against the wind, which had now veered to the southeast, and was blowing us straight on to the Caycos shallows.

By four o'clock we'd got so far out that we thought we might lie to a bit and take a few hands off navigating duty to assist the engineer in repairing his engine.

But it proved a much more difficult and lengthy task to retrieve the mischief than we had at first sight at all anticipated. The min-

utes went by with appalling rapidity. Five o'clock came, and the smith was only just getting his iron well hammered into shape. Six o'clock, and the engineer was still fitting the place it came from. Seven o'clock — something wrong, surely, with the ship's time! Before this hour I had hoped to be anchored off the harbor of Tanaki.

Seven o'clock on Wednesday morning; and by twelve at noon, so the boys assured us, the ovens would be made hot at Taranaka's tomb for those unfortunate prisoners on the remote island!

Oh, how frantically we worked for the next two hours! and how remorselessly everything seemed to turn against us! How is it that whenever one's in the greatest hurry all nature seems to conspire to defeat one's purpose? I won't attempt to explain to you all the petty mishaps and unfortunate failures that attended our efforts. It seemed as if iron, wood, and coal — all inanimate matter itself — was banded together to make our further approach to Tanaki impossible. By nine o'clock I knew the

worst myself. The break-down to the engine was far more serious than we had at first imagined. I felt sure that before noon, at earliest, with all our skill and toil, we couldn't possibly repair it.

But I shrank from telling those two poor trembling lads that there was no hope now left of saving their parents.

Gradually, however, as the day wore on, they discovered it themselves, — they saw that the golden opportunity had been lost for us. As each hour passed by they told us, with ever redoubled horror, what they knew must at that moment be passing on the island. Now the savages would be bringing their father out before the prison hut, and sacrificing him with their tomahawks by the hideous blood-stained altar of their great dead chieftain. Now their poor mother would be crouching on the ground, trying in vain to protect their helpless little brother. Now Miriam herself, little golden-haired, three-year-old, innocent Miriam — but at that last horror they broke down in tears, and could say no more. They could only sob,

and hide their faces in their hands with speechless agony at that unspeakable picture.

By noon we knew the worst must be over. They were at rest now, poor souls, from their month-long misery. The afternoon dragged on, and we worked hard still, on the mere chance of some respite which might enable us to rescue them. But we felt sure the end had come, for all that. We worked away by the mere force of pure aimless energy. It distracted us from thinking of the awful events which we nevertheless in our hearts felt certain must have happened.

It was eight at night before we got the *Albatross* fairly under weigh again; and even then she lumbered slowly, slowly on, the engine being only somehow repaired, in the most clumsy fashion, till we could reach harbor once more, and quietly overhaul her.

So we steamed ahead, feebly and cautiously, all night long, keeping a sharp lookout for land across our bows, and with Martin on deck almost all the time, to aid us by his close personal knowledge of the island approaches.

Wednesday the tenth was over now. The terrible day had come and gone. We didn't doubt that the massacre was completed long before the clock struck one on Thursday morning.

CHAPTER VI.

ON THE ISLAND.

At Tanaki, meanwhile, as we afterwards learned by inquiry among the islanders, things had been going on with the unhappy missionary very much as our worst fears had led us to expect. Though I wasn't there at the time to see for myself, I got to know what happened a little later almost as well as if I'd been on the spot; so I shall take the liberty once more — not being one of these book-making chaps — of telling my story my own way, and explaining how matters went, in rough sailor fashion, without trying to let you know in detail how we found it all out till I come to explain the upshot of our present adventures.

Well, on the night when Martin and Jack stole away from the hut and got clear off on their venturesome journey in the mission boat, their father and mother, with little Calvin, who

was eight years old, and Miriam, who was a pretty wee lassie of three, were heavily guarded by half a dozen desperate and drunken savages in the temple tomb of the deceased Taranaka. It was a thatched native grass-house, with a bare mud floor, and a rough altar-slab raised high on the threshold, which covered the remains of the bloodthirsty old chieftain, — the man who in his early youth had seen "Capitaney Cook," when he discovered the islands. The Melanesian natives, I ought to tell you, regard their dead ancestors as a sort of gods or guardian spirits, and frequently offer up food and drink at their graves as presents to appease them. Every morning, gifts of taro, breadfruit, and plantain were laid on the altar by Taranaka's tomb; and once every ten days a little square gin, mixed with cocoa-milk, was poured out upon the rude slab of unsculptured stone, that the dead chief's ghost might come to drink of it, and be satisfied. Wednesday the tenth was the anniversary of Taranaka's death (he had been killed in a fight with some neighboring islanders, who fell out with him over the

wreck of an American whaling vessel), and it was on that festival day that the chief proposed offering up the blood of our fellow countrymen as an expiation to the shades of his departed relative.

Macglashin and his wife never even knew that the boys had escaped. If they had, those long days of suspense might have been even worse for them. They might have been looking forward with mad hope to some miracle of rescue, such as that which the *Albatross* had so boldly planned, and which had been so cruelly interfered with by the break-down of our machinery. As it was, the savages carefully kept from them all knowledge of their boys' escape. They never even breathed a hint of that desperate voyage. Every day, on the contrary, when they brought the unhappy missionary and his wife their daily rations of yam and banana, they taunted them with threats of what tortures the chief had still in store for Jack and Martin. They were fatting them up, they said, for Taranaka to feed upon. On Taranaka's day they would be offered up as victims on the cannibal altar.

But the most terrible part of all the poor father's and mother's sufferings was the fact that they couldn't keep the knowledge of that awful fate in store for them even from Calvin and pretty little Miriam. Macglashin's diary, which I read later on, was just heartrending about the children. Those helpless mites cowered all day long on the bare mud floor of that hideous temple, awaiting the horrible doom that the savages held out before them with the painful resignation of innocent childhood. They were too frightened to cry over it; too frightened to talk of it; they only crouched, pale and terrified, by their mother's side, and dragged out the long day in horrible apprehensions. They knew they must die, and they sat there, watching for that inevitable sentence to be carried out, with the stoical fortitude of utter childish helplessness. Well, there, — I'm an old hand on the sea, you know, and I don't mind the dangers of the wind and waves for grown men and boys, that can look after themselves, any more than most of you land-folks mind dodging about in the Strand at Charing Cross on a crowded after-

noon in the London season; but I can't bear to talk, or even to think, of what those poor children suffered all those terrible days in the heathen tomb-house. There are things that make a man's blood run cold to speak about. That makes mine run cold; I can't dwell on it any longer; it's too ghastly to realize.

So there, — the days went by, one after another; and Monday the eighth came, and Tuesday the ninth, and still no chance of escape or rescue. Up to the last moment, Macglashin hoped (as he says in the diary) that some miracle might occur to set them free, some interposition of Providence on their behalf to prevent the last misfortune from overtaking his poor, pallid little Miriam. Perhaps the mission ship, that went her rounds twice a year, might happen to put in, out of due season, with some special message, or under stress of weather; or perhaps some whaling vessel or some English gunboat might arrive in the nick of time in the little harbor of Tanaki. But when Tuesday evening came, and no help had arrived, the unhappy man's heart sank within him. He gave up that

last wild hope of a rescue at the eleventh hour, and addressed himself to die with what courage he could muster.

Ah, yes, to die oneself is all easy enough; nobody worth his salt minds that; but to see one's wife and children murdered before one's eyes,—there, I'm a rough sort of sailor-body, as I said before, but you must excuse my breaking off. I haven't got the strength to hold my pen and write about it. Why, I've a boy of my own at school at Sydney, and my Mary's in England, bless her little heart! at a lady's college, they call it nowadays; and I know what it means; I know what it means, gentlemen. I'd no more expose those two dear children in the places I've been among the islands myself, than —well, than I'd send them to sea alone in a cockboat. And my heart just bleeds for that poor father at Tanaki, when I read his diary over again, though I haven't got the skill to put it all down in words at full length, as one of those fellows would do that write for the newspapers.

However, on Tuesday night, neither Mac-

glashin himself nor Mrs. Macglashin could get a wink of sleep, as you may easily imagine. They sat up in the temple, with their backs against the wall, and relays of black fellows, armed with Sniders, and smeared with red paint, watching them closely all the while, to see they didn't escape, or try to do away with themselves. But Calvin fell asleep, out of pure fatigue, on his mother's lap, and Miriam, poor little soul, lay against her father's shoulder, dozing as peacefully as ever she dozed in her own small cot at the mission house, where she was born. Once the thought came into her father's mind, oughtn't he to twist his handkerchief round her soft little throat, as she lay there all unconscious in his circling arms, to save her from the tender mercies of those cruel black savages? How could he tell what torments they might inflict upon her? Wasn't it better she should be spared all that horror of fear? Wasn't it better she should just sleep away her dear little life without ever knowing it, till she woke, next morning, in a happier and a brighter country? But in another minute his heart recoiled from

the terrible thought. While there was still one chance of safety he must let things take their course. Perhaps even those black monsters might have pity at the last on that one ewe lamb. Perhaps they might spare his Miriam's life, and make her over to the mission ship, when it next arrived on its rounds at the island.

All that night long the savages, for their part, were holding a *sing-sing*, as they call it, close by, and the hideous noise of their heathenish revels could be distinctly heard by the watchers in the temple. They danced to the music of their hollow drums, while the shells upon their ankles resounded in unison. At times the echo of horrible laughter fell harsh upon the ear. The natives, covered with red feathers and smeared with blood, were keeping high festival, as is their horrid custom. And as the long hours wore away, the din of their revelry became more wild in their orgies each moment.

Morning dawned at last, — the morning of Wednesday the tenth, when that awful deed of bloodshed was to be done before the open eye of heaven; and with the first streak of light the

poor children awoke and gazed round them blankly at their temple prison. The black watchers brought them yam and mammee-apples once more, but they couldn't eat; they sat bewildered and mute, with their hands clasped in their parents' palms, waiting for the end, and too dazed and terrified, almost, to know what was passing.

About six o'clock the chief came down to the temple, with bloodshot eyes and tottering feet, attended by half a dozen naked black followers. They had all been drinking, the greater part of the night, at the *sing-sing*, for the Frenchmen had left plenty of square gin behind; and they rollicked in the cruel good-humor of the born savage.

"How do, Macglashin?" the chief inquired with a hateful leer. "How do, white woman? Taranaka day come at last. How you like him this morning? What for you no tell man a Tanaki sooner you don't know Englishman? Ha! ha! dat true; so him see. Queenie England no care for Scotchman."

"If you dare to touch a hair of our heads,"

Macglashin cried in his despair, rising up and facing the savage, angrily, "sooner or later, I tell you, the Queen of England will hear of it, and she'll send a gunboat to punish you for our death, and her sailors'll shoot you all down for your part in this murder."

The chief laughed, — a wild, horrible, barbaric laugh. "Ha! ha!" he answered. "Dat all very fine for try frighten me. But man a *oui-oui* tell me you no true Englishman. You speakee English, but you Scotchman born. All samee American. Queenie England no care for American, no care for Scotch; no send her gunboat for look after Scotchman. Man a Tanaki go for eat you to-day, for do honor to ghost a Taranaka."

Macglashin saw that words would produce no effect upon the tipsy and excited wretch; he must make up his mind for the worst. There was no help for it.

"At least," he cried, "chief, you'll let us say good-by to our boys before we die? You'll bring them in for their mother and me to take our last farewell of them?"



"'COME OUT, MACGLASHIN!' SAID THE CHIEF, MOCKINGLY."

The chief shook his head and made a hideous grimace. "No say good-by to boys," he said, with horrible glee. "Man a Tanaki kill pig all night; kill Scotchman in morning. Kill baby first; then boy; then mother. Last of all, kill you yourself, Macglashin. Taranaka very much love white man's blood. Great day to-day for feast for Taranaka." And he went off again, grinning in hideous buffoonery, while Macglashin's soul seethed in speechless indignation.

For half an hour more they were left undisturbed. Then the chief appeared at the door once more, and, beckoning with his long black forefinger, called to the missionary:

"Come out, Macglashin!"

The unhappy man strode out, with little Miriam, half fainting, in his arms.

"Come out, white woman!" the savage cried once more.

The pale mother, almost unable to totter with terror, made her way to the door, with Calvin's fingers intertwined in her own.

"Now, white people, we going to shoot you," the savage continued, unabashed. "You make

too much trouble for man a Tanaki. Interfere too much with man who sell him boy or him woman. Me don't going to kill you with axe, like Taranaka kill first missionary that come a Tanaki. Man a *oui-oui* sell me plenty Snider. Man a Tanaki want to try him shooting-irons. Set you up to run, and then go fire at you."

At the word he nodded, and four stalwart savages caught Macglashin in their arms and held him to a line drawn lightly in the dust by the chief's stick. At the same moment four others caught his unhappy wife, and dragged her, half senseless, to the selfsame line. The two children were ranged by their sides, pale and white with terror. Then the chief walked forward, and drew another line some forty yards in front of them with his stick again. "When chief call 'go,'" he called out, "man a Tanaki let go missionary, and boy, and white woman. Missionary run till him reach dis line. Man a Tanaki no shoot till missionary pass dis line. Den man a Tanaki fire; missionary run; man a Tanaki run after missionary to kill him.

Whoever shoot missionary or white woman first, give him body up in temple to Taranaka."

As he spoke, the savages ranged themselves behind, Sniders in hand. The chief placed himself in order at their head, on the right. Then he called out in Kanaka, "When I give the word, — 'one, two, three,' — loose them! When I give the word, 'Fire!' off with your rifles at them."

There was a deadly pause. All was still as death. Then the chief cried aloud, "One — two — three — loose them!" and the savages loosed the poor terrified Europeans.

Even in that supreme moment of agony and doubt, however, one thought kept rising ever in the father's and mother's hearts. What had become of Jack and Martin?

CHAPTER VII.

ERRORS EXCEPTED.

It was Thursday the eleventh, in the small hours of the morning. The *Albatross* was lumbering along as best she might with her broken engine, and we were nearing the line of 180°. We weren't making much way, however, for the speed was low; and we hadn't so much reason for hurrying now, for we felt almost hopeless of being in time to prevent the threatened massacre. Our people, we feared, had long since fallen victims to the superstition and bloodthirstiness of the ungrateful savages.

I was asleep in my berth after the fatigues of the day, and was dreaming of my dear little girl in England, when suddenly I felt a clammy cold hand laid upon my own outside the coverlet, and, waking with a start, I saw Martin Luther standing pale and white in his blue shirt and trousers

before me. I knew at once by his face something fresh had turned up.

"Goodness gracious, boy!" I exclaimed, "what on earth's the matter now?"

"Captain Braithwaite," he answered, with very solemn seriousness, "I've been counting the days over and over again, and I'm quite sure there's a mistake somewhere. We've got a day wrong in our reckoning, I'm certain. I've counted up each day and night a hundred times over since we left Tanaki in the boat, — Jack and I, — and I feel confident you're twenty-four hours out in your reckoning. Yesterday wasn't Wednesday the tenth at all. It was Tuesday the ninth, and we may yet reach Tanaki in time to save them."

"No, no, my boy," I answered, "you're wrong; you're wrong. Your natural anxiety about your father's fate has upset your calculations. To-day's the eleventh; yesterday was the tenth. Till we get to the meridian of 180°— " and then, with a start, I broke off, suddenly.

"What's the matter?" Martin cried, for he saw at once I was faltering and hesitating. "Ah,

you see I was right now. You see this morning's the tenth, don't you?"

In a moment the truth flashed across me with a burst. I saw it all; the only wonder was how on earth I had failed so long to perceive it. I seized the poor lad's hand in a fervor of delight, relief, and exultation.

"Martin," I cried, overjoyed, "we are both of us right in our own way of reckoning. This morning's the eleventh on board the *Albatross* here, but it's the tenth, I don't doubt, in your island at Tanaki!"

"What do you mean?" he cried, astonished, and gazing at me as if he thought me rather more than half mad. "How on earth can it be Thursday here, while it's Wednesday at Tanaki?"

"Hold on a bit, youngster," said I, jumping out of my cabin, "till I've consulted the chart and made quite sure about it. Let me see. Here we are. Duke of Cumberland's Islands, 179° west. Hooray! Hooray!" I waved the chart round my head in triumph. "Jim, Jim!" I shouted out, rushing up the companion-ladder in my nightshirt as I stood; "here's a hope in-

deed! Here's splendid news. Put on all steam at once and we may save them yet. Tanaki's the other side of 180!"

Jim looked at me in astonishment.

"Why, what on earth do you mean, Julian?" he asked. "What on earth has that to do with our chance of saving them?"

"Jim," I cried once more, hardly knowing how to contain myself, with excitement and reaction; "was there ever such a precious pair of fools in the world before as you and me, my good fellow? It's Wednesday morning in Tanaki, man! It's Wednesday in Tanaki! Tanaki's the other side of 180!"

As I said the words, Jim jumped at me like a wild creature and grasped my hand hard. Then he caught Martin in his arms and hugged him as tight as if he'd been his own father. After that, he threw his cap in the air and shouted aloud with delight. And when he'd quite finished all those remarkable performances, he looked hard into my face and burst out laughing.

"Well, upon my soul, Julian," he said, "for a couple of seasoned old Pacific travellers, I do

agree with you that a pair of bigger fools and stupider dolts than you and I never sailed the ocean!"

"If it had been our first voyage across, now," I said to Jim, feeling thoroughly ashamed of myself for my silly mistake, "there might have been some excuse for us!"

"Or if the boy hadn't told us there was a discrepancy in the accounts the very first day he ever came aboard," he added, solemnly.

"But, as it is," I went on, "such a scholar's mate, such a beginner's blunder as this is for two seafaring men — why, it's absolutely inexcusable!"

"Absolutely inexcusable!" Jim repeated, penitently.

"But if we clap on all steam we may get there yet on Wednesday morning," I continued, consulting my watch.

"By three or four o'clock on Wednesday morning," Jim echoed, examining the chart once more, and carefully noting the ship's position. "Why, it's Wednesday now, Julian. We've crossed 180°."

"But what day was yesterday?" Martin asked, all trembling.

"Why, yesterday," I answered, "was Wednesday the tenth, my boy; but to-day is Wednesday the tenth also. It comes twice over at this longitude. We've gained a day; that's the long and the short of it. We ought to have known it, my brother and I, who are such old hands at cruising in and out of the islands; but our anxiety and distress made us clean forget it."

"How does that come about?" Martin asked, bewildered, his lips white as death.

"Just like this," said I. "Sailing one way, you see, from England, you sail with the sun; and sailing the other way, you sail against it. In one direction you keep gaining time, and in the other you lose it. The meridian of 180° is the particular place where the two modes of reckoning reach their climax. So, when you get to 180°, sailing west, you lose a day, and Saturday's followed right off by Monday. But sailing east, you gain a day, and have two Sundays running, or whatever else the day may be when you happen to get there. Now, we're

going in the right direction for gaining a day; and so, though yesterday was Wednesday the tenth the other side of 180°, to-day's Wednesday the tenth, don't you see, this side of it? And as Tanaki's this side, your people must always have reckoned by the American day, so to speak, while we've reckoned all along by the Australian one. It's this morning those savages threatened to kill your father and mother, and if we make a good run, we shall still perhaps be in time to save them."

As I spoke, the boy's knees trembled under him with excitement. He staggered so that he caught at a rope for support. He was too much in earnest to cry, but the tears stood still in his eyes without falling.

"Oh! I hope to heaven we'll be in time!" he answered. "We may save them! We may save them!"

I went below and turned in once more for a little sleep, for I knew I should be wanted later in the morning; and having, fortunately, the true sailor's habit in that matter of dozing off whenever occasion occurred, I was soon snoring away

again most comfortably on my pillow. At half-past three, Tom Blake came down once more to wake me.

"Land in sight, sir," he said, "on our starboard bow, and this young fellow Martin says he makes it out to be the north point of Tanaki."

In a minute I was on deck again, and peering at the dim land through the gray mist of morning, — the same gray mist through which, as we afterwards learned, the poor creatures in the heathen temple saw the dawn break of the day that was to end their earthly troubles. It was Tanaki, no doubt, for Martin was quite sure he could recognize the headlands and the barrier reef. Our only question now was how next to proceed. We held a brief little council of war on deck, with Martin as our chief adviser on the local situation.

From what he told us, I came rapidly to the conclusion that it would be useless to attempt an open entrance into the little harbor of Makilolo, where the chief had his hut, and where the mission people, as we believed, were still confined

in the temple. To do so would only be to arouse the anger of the savages beforehand; and unless we could get them well between a cross fire, and so effectually prevent any further outrage, we feared they might massacre the unhappy people in their hands the moment we hove in sight to enter the harbor. But here our friend Martin's local knowledge of the archipelago helped us out of our difficulty. He could pilot us, he said, to a retired bay at the back of the island, by the east side, where we could land a small party in boats, well armed with Sniders and our Winchester repeater; and Jack, who had slept all night, and was therefore the fresher of the two, would show us a path through the thick tropical underbrush, by which we could approach the village from the rear, while the *Albatross* ran round again with the remainder of the crew, and brought our brass thirty-pounder to bear upon the savages from the open harbor.

This plan was at once received with universal approbation, and we proceeded forthwith to put it into execution.

Steering cautiously round the island, under

cover of the mist, and, fortunately, unperceived by the assembled natives, who were too much occupied with their *sing-sing* to be engaged in scanning the offing, we reached at last the little retired bay of which Martin had spoken, and got ready our boat to land our military party. It was ticklish work, for we could afford to land only ten, all told, with Jack for our guide; but each man was armed with a good rifle and ammunition, and the habit of discipline made our little band, we believed, more than a match for those untutored savages. Nassaline, also, joined the military party, while seven men were left as a naval reserve. Silently and cautiously we landed on the white sandy beach, and turned with Jack into the thick tangled brake of tropical brushwood.

Meanwhile, my brother Jim, with Martin to guide him, undertook to take the *Albatross* round to the regular harbor; for Martin fortunately knew every twist and turn of those tortuous reef-channels, having been accustomed to navigate them from his childhood upwards, both in the mission boat and in the native canoes

which frequently put to sea for the *pêche-de-mer* fishery.

Our plan of action, as arranged beforehand, was for the military party to wait about in the woods at the back of the village till the *Albatross* hove in sight off the mouth of the harbor. Then, the moment she appeared, she was to fire a blank shot towards the chief's hut with her thirty-pounder; and, at the same moment, we of the surprise party were to fall upon the savages, and, before they could recover from their first surprise, demand the instant restitution of the missionary and his family.

Everything depended now upon the two boys. If Jack failed to show us the path aright — if Martin drove the *Albatross* upon reef or rock — all would be up with us, and the savages would massacre our whole party in cold blood, as they proposed to do with Macglashin and his little ones. I trembled to think on how slender a thread those four precious human lives depended. After all, they were but lads, mere children, almost, and the rash confidence of youth might easily deceive them. But I decided, none the

less, to trust to their instincts and their keen affection for their friends to see us through in our need. If that wouldn't lead us right, I felt sure in my own soul no human aid could possibly save the unhappy prisoners.

CHAPTER VIII.

HOT WORK.

JACK led us from the beach over the white coral sand straight up to the wood, and, after looking about for awhile on every side to make sure of his bearings among the huge fallen logs, hit at last upon a faint trail that led straggling through the forest, — a trail scarcely worn into the semblance of a path by the bare feet of naked savages. Following his guidance, we plunged at once, with some doubtful misgivings, into the deep gloom of the woodland, and found ourselves immediately in a genuine equatorial thicket, where mouldering trunks of palms encumbered the vague path, and great rope-like lianas hung down in loops from the trees overhead, to block our way at every second step through that fatiguing underbrush. The day was warm, even as we travellers who know the world judge warmth in the tropical South

Pacific; and the moist heat of that basking, swampy lowland, all laden with miasma from the decaying leaves, seemed to oppress us with its deadly effluvia and its enervating softness at every yard we went through the jungle. Moreover, we had to carry our arms and ammunition among that tangled brake; and as our rifles kept catching continually in the creepers that drooped in festoons from the branches, while our feet got simultaneously entangled in the roots and trailing stems that straggled underfoot, you can easily imagine for yourself that ours was indeed no pleasant journey. However, we persevered with dogged English perseverance; the sailors tramped on and wiped their foreheads with their sleeves from time to time; while poor Jack, still weak from his long and terrible fast, marched bravely at our head with an indomitable pluck which reflected the highest credit on Mr. Macglashin's training.

The only one who seemed to make light of the toil was our black boy Nassaline.

We went single file, of course, along the narrow trail, which every here and there divided

to right or left in the midst of the brake with most puzzling complexity. At every such division or fork in the track, Jack halted for a moment and cast his eye dubiously to one side and the other, at last selecting the trail that seemed best to him. Nassaline, too, helped us not a little by his savage instincts for finding his way through trackless jungle. For my own part, I could never have believed any road on earth could possibly be so tortuous; and at last, at the end of the twenty-fifth turn or thereabouts, I ventured to say in a very low voice (for we were stealing along in dead silence), "Why, Jack, I believe you're leading us round and round in a circle, and you'll bring us out again, in the end, at the very same bay where we first landed!"

"Hush!" Jack answered, with one finger on his lip. "We're drawing near the outskirts of the village now. You must be very quiet. I can just see the grass roof of Taranaka's temple peeping above the brushwood to the right. In three minutes more we shall be out in the open."

And sure enough he told the truth. Almost as he ceased speaking, the noise of savage voices fell full upon my ear from the village in front, and I could hear the natives, in their hideous corroboree, beating hard upon their hollow drums of stretched skin, and shouting in the dance to their drunken comrades.

It was a ghastly noise, but it did our hearts good just then to hear it.

I could almost have clapped my hands upon Jack's back and given him three cheers for his gallant guidance when we saw the village plot opening up in front of us, and the naked savages, in their war-paint and feathers, guarding the door of Taranaka's temple. But the necessity for caution compelled me to preserve a solemn silence. So we crouched as still as mice behind a clumpy thicket of close-leaved tiro bushes, and peeped out from our ambush through the dense foliage, to keep an eye upon the scene till the *Albatross* hove into sight in the harbor.

"My father and my mother must still be there," Jack whispered under his breath, but

in a deep tone of relief. "The Tanaki men are guarding them exactly as they did when Martin and I left the island. I almost think I can see Miriam's head through the open door. We shall be in time still to deliver them from these bloodthirsty wretches."

"In what direction must we look for the *Albatross?*" I whispered back. "Will she come in from the south there?"

"Oh, no!" Jack answered, in a very low voice. "That's an island to the right,—a little rocky island that guards the harbor. There's deep water close in by the shore that side. Martin'll try to bring her in the northern way, so that the natives mayn't see her till she's close upon the village. It's a difficult channel to the north, all full of reefs and sunken rocks; but I think he understands it, he's swam in it so often. We won't see her at all till she's right in the harbor and just opposite the temple."

We were dying of thirst now, and longing for a drink, but could get nothing to quench our drought. "What I would give," I muttered to Tom Blake, "for a drink of water!"

"If captain want water," Nassaline answered, "me soon get him some." And he made a gash with his knife in the stem of a sort of gourd that climbed over the bushes, from which there slowly oozed and trickled out a sort of gummy juice that relieved to some degree our oppressive sensations. All the men began at once cutting and chewing it, with considerable satisfaction. It wasn't as good as a glass of British beer, I will freely admit; but still, it was better than nothing, anyway.

By this time it was nearly half-past six, and we watched eagerly to see what action the natives would take as soon as they finished their night-long *sing-sing*. Lying flat on the ground, with our rifles ready at hand, and our heads just raised to look out among the foliage, we kept observing their movements cautiously through the thick brushwood.

At a quarter to seven we saw some bustle and commotion setting in on a sudden in front of the temple; and, presently, a tall, sinister-looking native, who, Jack whispered to me, was the chief of Tanaki, came up from the village,

where the *sing-sing* had taken place, and stood by the door of the thatched grass-house. We could distinctly hear him call the missionary to come out, in pigeon-English; and the next moment, our unfortunate countryman staggered forth, with his little daughter, half fainting, in his arms, and stood out in the bare space between the tomb of Taranaka and the spot where we were lying.

Oh! how I longed to take a shot at that miscreant black fellow!

At sight of his father, worn with fatigue and pale with the terror of that agonizing moment, Jack almost cried aloud in his mingled joy and apprehension; but I clapped my hand on his mouth and kept him still for the moment. "Not a sound, my boy, not a sound," I whispered low, "till the time comes for firing!"

"Shall we give it them hot, now?" Tom Blake inquired low at my ear the next moment. But I waved him aside, cautiously.

"Not yet," I answered, "unless the worst comes to the worst, and we see our people in pressing and immediate danger; we'd better

do nothing till the *Albatross* heaves in sight. Her gun will frighten them. To fire now would be to expose ourselves and our friends there to unnecessary danger."

"All right, sir," Tom murmured low, in reply. "You know best, of course. But I must say, it'd do my 'eart good to up an' pepper 'em!"

"Come out, white woman!" we heard the chief say next, with insolent familiarity; and Mrs. Macglashin stepped out, a deplorable figure, with her boy's hand twined in hers, and her white lips twitching with horror for her little ones. It made one's blood boil so, to see it, that we could hardly resist the temptation, as we looked, to fire at all hazards, and let them know good friends were even now close at hand to help and deliver them.

"Whether the *Albatross* heaves in sight or not," I whispered to Tom Blake, "we must fire at them soon, — within five minutes, — and sell our lives as dearly as we can. I can't stand this much longer. It's too terrible a strain. Come what may, I must give the word and at them!"

"Quite right, sir," says Tom. "What's the use of delaying?"

And, indeed, I began to be terribly afraid, by this time, there was something very wrong indeed somewhere. Could Martin have missed his way among those difficult shoals, and run our trusty vessel helplessly on the rocks and reefs? It looked very like it. They were certainly overdue; for even at the present crippled rate of speed, the good old *Albatross* had had plenty of time, I judged, to round the point and get back safe again into the deep water of the harbor. If she failed in this our hour of need, the natives would surround us, and cut us to pieces in a mass, for our best reliance was in our solid brass thirty-pounder. I began to tremble in my shoes for some time for the possible upshot. Over and over again I glanced eagerly towards the point for that longed-for white nose of hers to appear round the corner.

At last, unable to restrain my curiosity any longer, I rose to my feet and peered across the bushes. As I did so, I saw the savages seize Macglashin in their arms, and range the four

poor fugitives in a line together. My blood curdled. The chief and the ten savages with the Sniders stood in a row, half fronting us where we lay. Macglashin and his wife were fortunately out of line of fire for our rifles. "Now, we can delay no longer," I cried. "He means murder. The moment the black fellow gives the word of command, fire at once upon him and his men, boys. Take steady aim. No matter what comes. Let the poor souls have a run for their lives, anyway."

As I spoke, the chief uttered in Kanaka the native words for "One, two, three," with loud drunken laughter.

At the sound of the chief's voice, the savages loosed the four wretched Europeans. At the very same sound we all fired simultaneously,—and six of the black monsters fell writhing on the ground, while the chief and the four others, taken completely by surprise, dropped their rifles in their supreme astonishment.

"Forward, boys, and secure them!" I cried, dashing out into the open, and waving my hat to the astounded missionary. "Here we are, sir.

Run this way! We're friends. We've come to your rescue. Catch the chief at once, lads; and — hooray for the *Albatross!*"

For, just as I spoke, to my joy and relief, her good white nose showed at last round the point; and next instant, the boom! boom! of her jolly brass thirty-pounder, fired in the very nick of time, completed the discomfiture of the astonished savages.

Before they knew where they were, they found themselves hemmed in between a raking cross-fire from our Sniders on one side, and the heavy gun of the *Albatross* on the other. The tables were now completely turned. We charged at them, running. Macglashin, seizing the situation at a glance, caught up one of the rifles belonging to the wounded men, which had been flung upon the ground, and, hardly yet realizing his miraculous escape, joined our little party as an armed recruit with surprising alacrity. For the next ten minutes there was a terrible scene of noise and confusion. The blacks advanced upon us, swarming up from the village like bees or wasps, and it was only

by a hand-to-hand fight with our bayonets — for we had fortunately brought them in case of close quarters — that we kept our dusky enemy at bay. At last, however, after a smart hand-to-hand contest, we secured the chief, and tied him safely with the rope he had loosed from Macglashin. Then we seized the remaining Sniders that lay upon the ground, while the men of the village, drunk and stupefied, began to fall back a little and molest us from a distance.

"Now, put the lady and children in the centre, boys," I cried, at the top of my voice, "and let the chief march along with us as a hostage. Down to the shore, while the *Albatross* boat puts out to save us!" Then I turned to the savages, and called out in English, "If any one of you dares to fire at us, I give you fair warning, we shoot your chief! Hold off, there, all of you!"

To my great delight, Nassaline, standing forward as I spoke, translated my words to them into their own tongue, and, waving them back with his hands, made a little alley for us through

the midst to regain the shore by. Smart boy, Nassaline.

After a moment, however, the natives once more began to crowd round us, as we started to march, in very threatening attitudes, with their Sniders and hatchets. At one time I almost thought they would overpower us; but, just then, Jim, who was watching the proceedings with his glass, from the deck of the *Albatross*, and saw exactly how matters stood, created a judicious diversion at the exact right moment by firing a little grape-shot plump into the heart of the grass huts of the village, and bowling over a roof or two before the very eyes of the astonished savages. They fell back at once, and began to make signs of desiring a parley. So we halted on the spot, with the lady and children still carefully guarded, and held up our handkerchiefs in sign of truce. Then Nassaline, aided by our sailor who understood the Kanaka language, began to palaver with them. He told them in plain and simple terms we must first be allowed to take the lady and children in safety to the *Albatross*, and that we

would afterwards come back to treat at greater length with their head men as to the chief's safety. To this, after some demur, the black fellows assented; and we beckoned to Jim accordingly, by a preconcerted sign, to send the boat ashore to us, to fetch off the fugitives. At the same time we retreated in military order, in a small hollow square, to the beach, still taking good care to protect in the midst our terrified non-combatants.

As for the chief, he marched before us, with his hands tied, and his feet free, led by a rope, the ends of which I held myself, with the aid of two of my sailors. A more ridiculously crest-fallen or disappointed creature than that drunken and conquered savage at that particular moment it has never yet been my fate to light upon.

We reached the beach in safety, and sent Mrs. Macglashin and the children aboard, with Jack to accompany them. Then we turned to parley with the discomfited savages. Jim kept the thirty-pounder well pointed in their direction, with ostentatious precision, and we made them hold off along the beach at a convenient

distance, where he could rake them in security, while we ourselves retained the chief in our hands, with a pistol at his head, as a gentle reminder that we meant to stand no nonsense.

After a few minutes' parley, conducted chiefly by our Kanaka-speaking sailor, with an occasional explanation put in by our assistant interpreter, Nassaline, we arrived at an understanding, in accordance with which we were to return them their chief for the time being, on consideration of their bringing us down to the beach all the Macglashins' goods, and making restitution for the sack of the mission house in dried cocoanut, the sole wealth of the island. Those were the terms for the immediate present, as a mere personal matter; for the rest, we gave the chief clearly to understand that we intended to sail straight away, with all our guests, for Fiji, there to lay our complaint of his conduct before the British High Commissioner in the South Pacific. We would then charge him with murder and attempted cannibalism, and with stirring up his people to massacre the

other missionary, and the trader Williams. We would endeavor to get a gunboat sent to the spot, to make official inquiry into the nature of the disturbances, and to demand satisfaction on the part of the relations of the murdered men. Finally, we would also lay before the Commissioner the conduct of the French labor-vessel, and her kidnapping skipper, who had instigated the savages to their dastardly attack, and whom I was strongly inclined to identify with the captain from whose grip we had rescued our friend Nassaline. We gave the chief to understand, therefore, that he must by no means consider himself as scot-free merely because we let him go unhurt till trial could be instituted by the proper authorities. He must answer hereafter for his high crimes and misdemeanors to the Queen's representative.

To all of which the penitent savage merely answered, with a sigh:

"Me make mistake. Kill missionary by accident. Man a *oui-oui* tell me Queenie England no care for Scotchman, an' me too much believe

him. Now captain tell me Queenie send gunboat for eat me up, and kill all my people. No listen any more to man a *oui-oui*."

And then we put off in triumph to the *Albatross*. The family meeting that ensued on board, when Macglashin stood once more upon a British deck with his wife and children, I won't attempt — rough sailor as I am — to describe. I don't believe even the special correspondent of a morning paper could do full justice to it. To see those two lads, too, catch their pretty little sister once more in their arms, and cover her with kisses, while she clung to their necks, and cried and laughed alternately, was a sight to do a man's heart good for another twelvemonth. And as we sat that same evening round the cabin-table (where our Malay cook had performed wonders of culinary art for the occasion), and drank healths all around to everybody concerned in this remarkable rescue, the toast that was received with the profoundest acclamations from every soul on board, was that of the two brave boys whose courage and skill had guided us at last, as if by a miracle,

to the recovery of all that was nearest and dearest to them.

Indeed, if Martin and Jack don't get the Victoria Cross when we return to England, I shall have even a lower opinion than ever before of her Majesty's confidential political advisers of all creeds or parties.

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